



Afternoon Update

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## **Madison County Election Board agrees to study vote centers**

**(<http://heraldbulletin.com/breakingnews/x766093963/Madison-County-Election-Board-agrees-to-study-vote-centers>)**

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**Clerk: Adoption could lower costs, increase convenience**

**By Stuart Hirsch**

**The Herald Bulletin (<http://heraldbulletin.com>)**

ANDERSON, Ind. — Jim King, the Democratic member of Madison County's regional vote centers are a good idea to make voting easier and election mar

But it's still too early in the process to know if county residents will support the three-member board agreed to study the concept and develop a plan to in

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"There's an awful lot of pros and cons that need to be addressed," King said. "It probably be a good thing for Madison County, but I have to decide what's best not what's best for Jim King."

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County Clerk Darlene Likens, who's been leading the effort, said one of the co detailed cost analysis. Another will be to gauge public sentiment for the move around the county to gather those views.

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Republican Election Board Chairwoman Barbara Hutton said she wants to ma trouble voting.

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"There are still a lot of questions with them (vote centers), but it's definitely wo "It's going to take a little more study, and I want to hear what people think."

id.

Vote centers are a burgeoning trend around the country and here in Indiana because they can increase public engagement and lower the cost of managing elections.

Vote centers are polling places where any eligible county voter may cast a ballot on Election Day, or even

before, through early voting. Centers are more convenient and provide voters with more flexibility because they would no longer have to vote in their precinct.

Through a secure Internet connection, as ballots are cast, an electronic poll book is instantaneously updated, said Jeremy Burton, Indiana manager of Election Systems & Software, in a presentation to the board.

His company manufactured and maintains more than 400 vote tabulating machines the county uses.

The Indiana General Assembly passed vote center legislation in 2006, which authorized Cass, Tippecanoe and Wayne counties to test the concept.

In 2011, the General Assembly approved a bill allowing all Indiana counties to adopt vote centers. Last year, three additional counties — Blackford, Johnson and Switzerland — moved to vote centers.

Burton said they're more efficient, convenient, streamlines election administration, more secure and environmentally friendly.

Currently, voting occurs in 112 precincts, some of which have only a handful of voters, Likens said.

With vote centers, the county would be required to have one location per 10,000 residents, which means the county could reduce the number of voting sites to about 15. Locations could include shopping centers and other convenient locations, Likens added.

*Find Stu Hirsch on Facebook and @StuHirsch on Twitter, or call 640-4861.*



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